In the afternoon I nearly lost my way among the trails leading to the village. The Maué Indians who accompanied me, as well as the guide and the interpreter, had forged ahead, leaving me behind with two companions, and had already reached the maloca while I still attempted with difficulty to find my way, guided only by the sound of a horn which I could hear somewhere ahead of me.

It was a Munduruca Indian from Necodemos, who had generously come to meet me, and who blew on his instrument to guide me.

My satisfaction was great when at nightfall I came upon this savage, who was about thirty-five or forty, and who was short, fat, dark and ugly, but so happy and cheerful that he seemed like a child. [81]

I arrived in Necodemos at seven o'clock in the evening.

I was finally realizing one of my fondest wishes, namely, to see a savage tribe in its primitive state, exactly as it must have been before the discovery of Brazil, living according to the laws of nature and lacking all contact with the ideas of other peoples that might serve to alter its beliefs and traditions.

There are thinkers who do not acknowledge biblical tradition and who hold that mankind began its earthly journey in darkness, in the state of nudity and savagery I saw before me, and guided by the light of reason and by Providence climbed to the present state of civilization. This doctrine is more comforting than the one which represents man as fallen from a paradise of light and bliss, fallen, for minor sins that were not his own, into the extreme misery of these unhappy savages.

When I arrived, some eighty stout Munduruca awaited me on the village grounds and received me with a display of open curiosity.

To me, the appearance of these men was no less curious, painted as they were with such identical designs that they looked like uniformed soldiers. Dozens of fires which burned on the square lent this picture a sinister quality, casting reflections on the broad, naked, bronze-colored chests.

I greeted them, bidding them good evening with one of the few words in their language I had memorized for such purposes: "Chipate." They all answered: "Chipate." One of them addressed

609 himself to me, offering me some supper with another word which
[574] I had also learned: "Cobicobi."

Then I went into one end of the large house which is
[591] occupied by men only, and there made my quarters. [82]

The Munduruc whose hammocks hung on that side, and whose nearness might have disturbed me, graciously ceded me the space and moved to the other side.

I wish to emphasize the generous hospitality I received
[579] in Necodemos; it was all the more surprising as it came from barbarians altogether unacquainted with our social customs. Everything was placed at my disposal; nothing was done that might offend or inconvenience me.

Men, old and young, stood in a circle round me. Not
[562] a single woman was present -- not even one child of the female
542 sex. Only men were admitted to the large dwelling where I lodged, which was situated in the middle of the village and called tiçá.

My visit was a festive occasion for the savages; they gazed with amazement at everything they saw: the spermaceti candle which I lit, the watch, the travelling case, the writing case [carteira]. They scrutinized every object, passing it from hand to hand in the midst of noisy laughter.

This went on until midnight. The Munduruc greatly enjoyed this diversion; it was to them a unique and quite unexpected event. Finally, I told them that I was tired, and they replied: "Well, then, go to sleep!" Each repaired immediately to his hammock, saying: "See you tomorrow" -- "Cuia dié."

513 But these barbarians have the custom of blowing a horn
534 all through the night in their quarters or ehçá. It seems to be a sign of watchfulness. Now one, now another who happens to awaken, forsakes his comfort [tira-se de seu cuidado], seizes the horn which always hangs from the roof above his hammock and blows upon it as long as he pleases. After him another man follows suit. And this monotonous and melancholy music echoes mournfully through the surrounding forest. It is strictly a savage pastime. [83]

the men's house. The women of each dwelling cooked equal amounts of the food to be consumed and it was then brought out for the common meal.

Although food was shared throughout the village, the same rules did not apply to personal property in material objects. This class of articles, including weapons, hammocks, ornaments, basketry, and pottery, was really the only category that corresponds with our own property concepts. These things might be loaned or manufactured especially for another person, usually a close relative, but rarely did one person claim a personal object from another as a gift. A highly desired object was occasionally asked for and, while sometimes given, was often politely denied with a suitable excuse. It was not considered polite to demand something from another. Objects were sometimes traded, but such barter was relatively uncommon. There were no differences of wealth in the aboriginal society.

Division of labor

The main features of the division of labor have already been stated in the preceding discussion of subsistence techniques. It remains to summarize these into an overall picture of the structure of the Wumdurucú productive system.

In common with most tribes of the region, the basis of the division of labor was sexual. There were no specialized occupations among the women and the only one among the men, shamanism, was hereditary, done without reimbursement of any kind, and without releasing the individual from production